



**Georgia Mountains
Regional Commission**

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES



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Welcome!

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC) is a public sector, non-profit planning and development agency that serves a 12-county area in the Georgia Mountains Region and includes the following counties: Banks, Dawson, Franklin, Habersham, Hall, Hart, Lumpkin, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Union, and White. Additionally, the GMRC provides technical assistance to the 37 municipalities in the 12-county region.

One of 12 Regional Commissions in the state, the GMRC provides technical assistance to our 49 member governments in the areas of Economic Development, GIS, Human Resources, Planning, Revolving Loan Fund administration, and Workforce Development. The GMRC works with our communities to formulate goals and strategies for area growth and development. Upon request, the GMRC provides a variety of technical assistance that will improve community services and the quality of life for residents in the Georgia Mountains Region.

The GMRC is guided by a 41 member Council and is composed of individuals appointed by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker and one county elected official, one city elected official and one private sector individual from each of our 12 counties. City, county, and private sector representatives are chosen by the cities and counties they represent.

In the following pages, you will find information regarding our mission and purpose, the services we offer, the local governments that we serve, and the status, scope of planning, and economic development of the Georgia Mountains Region.

I want to express my sincere appreciation to the GMRC Council for the leadership and support shown to the Regional Commission. As an organization, we feel the strength of each of our Council Members, and I applaud the commitment each member puts forth towards the GMRC's mission.

Sincerely,



Heather J. Feldman
Executive Director

MISSION STATEMENT

To serve the local governments of the Georgia Mountains Region by improving the quality of life through economic development, community planning, information technology, and workforce development to support and enhance the region's prosperity.

Economic Development

The GMRC Economic Development Department serves as an extension of local governments and development organizations, assisting with financing projects related to community and economic development, infrastructure, industrial expansions, tourism, recreation, public safety, and capacity building.

Grant Writing

GMRC's ED Team has extensive experience in preparing federal and state grant and loan applications such as Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), OneGeorgia EDGE and EQUITY, USDA-Rural Development, Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA), Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG), Economic Development Administration (EDA), Recreational Trail Program (RTP), Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), as well as many other programs. Examples of recently funded projects include:

- Water and Sewer infrastructure
- Expansion of senior centers, and other community facilities
- Preservation of cultural and historic resources
- Workforce development & apprenticeship programs
- Assistance to firefighters for equipment and vehicles
- Recreational facilities, parks, and trails
- Asset-based development and tourism
- Broadband and Wi-Fi infrastructure
- Economic development planning

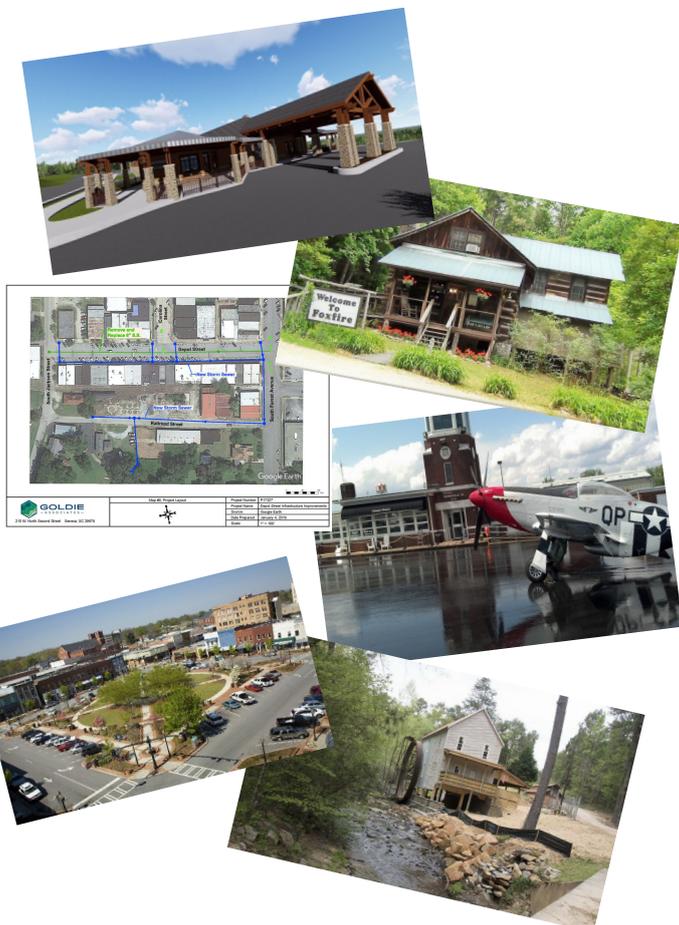
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

This department develops and maintains the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) document, which describes the region's needs, opportunities, resources, vision, and goals; establishes strategies and priority programs and projects for implementation, and outlines the standards for evaluation and update of the document. The Committee, made up of a cross-section of public and private citizens from the region, holds quarterly meetings to establish and monitor the regional economic development strategies for federally funded programs.

Grant Administration

The GMRC's Grant Administrator serves as consultant, liaison, problem-solver, and project administrator for units of local government on both state and federally funded projects. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following tasks:

- Monitors grant and project-related activities as directed to ensure compliance with state and federal guidelines.
- Oversees construction activities throughout the duration of the project and monitors contractors for compliance with applicable labor laws.
- Serves as liaison for local governments with Georgia Department of Community Affairs, EDA, OneGeorgia Authority, FEMA, Georgia Department of Transportation, USDA, and other state and federal agencies previously not mentioned
- Receives and approves all grant-related invoices for payment, prepares draw requests, and monitors drawdowns for local governments
- Administers the distribution of grant/loan funds, establishes and maintains grant accounting and filing systems



Information Services

The GMRC Department of Information Services offers a wide array of specialized services to our member governments. The primary focus is on Geographic Information Systems (GIS), a valuable tool used in analyzing and communicating special data.

Mapping and Spatial Analysis

The principal benefit of GIS is the level of interactive and thematic mapping that allows the GMRC to present and analyze spatial information. Services include:

- Official Zoning and Ordinance Maps
- Annual U.S. Census Bureau Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS) Maps
- Development and site analyses (environmental features, topography, and utilities)
- Site and resource mapping for historic preservation
- Environmental assessments, TMDL stream mapping and analysis
- Comprehensive Plan mapping, including land use, community facilities and more

GPS and Data Collection

With mapping grade Global Positioning Systems (GPS), the GMRC can field inventory any physical element, including infrastructure, trees, power or light poles, fire hydrants, tanks and wells.

- Infrastructure inventory - water, sewer, and storm water
- City/County owned cemetery inventory and expansion maps/designs

Geo-Database Management

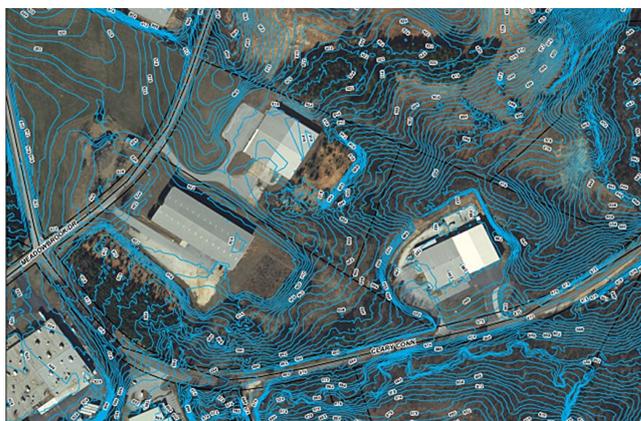
The GMRC is available to assist with local GIS data review and maintenance, providing an additional, experienced partner in managing critical data. This can include having the GMRC serve as your own GIS department.

- Local database design and system maintenance
- Parcel conversion and maintenance



Aerial Imagery and LiDAR Contours

The GMRC also assists with the incorporation of aerial imagery and ortho-photography into GIS data sets. This allows the use of aerial images with your spatial analyses for more visually dynamic maps.



Story Mapping

The GMRC Story Map is an interactive on-line application that allows users to see information regarding active GMRC projects in every county in the GMRC region. Visit <https://arcg.is/OqjyH> to learn about GMRC projects in your area!

The GMRC can assist cities and counties with online mapping applications that can be created for, but not limited to, infrastructure such as water, sewer, storm water to locate valves, hydrants, or lines and municipal owned and maintained cemeteries to locate plots for purchase or burial. These maps can be accessed by tablets or smart phones, allowing crews out in the field to view digital map data.

Community and Regional Planning is the practice of governments using informed decision making regarding the policies to manage land use and development, protect natural and cultural resources, and be efficient regarding capital investments. The GMRC Planning Department provides a variety of services and programs to bring this informed decision making to our member communities.

Local Community Development

Most services are provided directly to local governments, ensuring they have the tools and information needed to be proactive in shaping their future.

- Comprehensive Planning
- Urban Redevelopment/Master Planning
- Design and Development Guidelines
- Land Use and Zoning Ordinances
- Fire Services Assessment
- Hazard Mitigation Planning
- Parks and Recreation Planning
- Greenspace Planning
- Bike and Pedestrian Planning
- Planning Commission Training and Support
- Event/Retreat Facilitation

2016 Comprehensive Plan

Town of Bowersville, Georgia



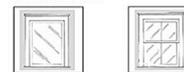
Resource Protection

In conjunction with state agencies and local stakeholders, the GMRC works in various ways to help preserve and promote the value of local natural and cultural resources.

- Watershed Management Plans
- Environmental Assessments
- Historic Resource/District Designations
- Hist. Preservation Commission Training and Support
- Property Rehab Assistance
- Development Impact Studies

RECOMMENDED

New or replacement windows should always match the historic or original windows in terms of type (double-hung or casement, for instance) and configuration (a single picture window should not replace a set of paired double-hung windows).



Storm windows should either be full-swing (left above) or have a meeting rail that correlates with the historic window (right above).

Storm windows come in both interior and exterior applications. Interior applications are most appropriate for historic structures as they allow the historic window to be fully visible on the exterior.

For new additions, windows should be similar in size, work and proportion, material, and detail to windows on the historic structure. Use of thermal pane windows with insulated double light (where a storm pane is placed over a thermal glass "sandwich" and cannot be removed) is acceptable. New shutters should be sized appropriately so that they would be able to cover the windows.

Bygone inappropriate doors with doors appropriate to the period and style of the building.

Replacement doors should not be modern "thick" style but have raised panels appropriate to the age and style of the building.

NOT RECOMMENDED

Security doors are relatively rare in many of those available in hardware stores and materials that do not complement the character of the original door or block its view. Therefore, security doors will be considered for secondary elevation entrances on a one-by-one basis.

Air conditioners should not be inserted in windows on the primary facade of the building.

Vinyl and aluminum shutters are not recommended.

Changing window opening size and shape should not be attempted to accommodate replacement windows or new interior furnishings.

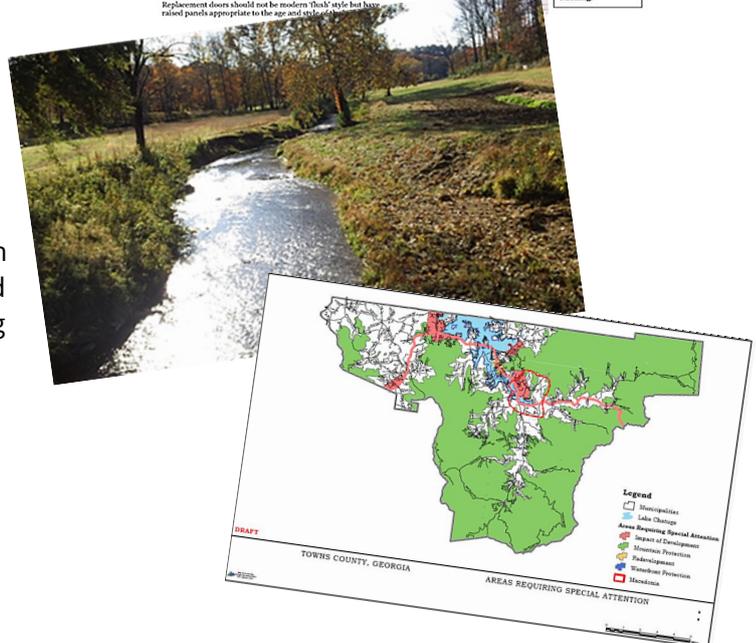
Example of window with non-working shutters that would not have historically included them.

Example of inappropriately sized window louver that is not characteristic of the building.

State and Regional Planning

The GMRC also produces several programs in coordination with various State Departments, providing services and products that work at a multi-jurisdictional scale, ensuring coordination among communities.

- GMRC Regional Plan
- Safe Routes to School Program Support
- U.S. Bike Route System Support
- State Water Council Support
- Rural Transit Planning
- Development of Regional Impact (DRI) Reviews



Revolving Loan Fund (RLF)

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission Revolving Loan Fund can make loans to companies for purposes that include acquisition and improvement of real estate, the purchase of machinery, equipment or inventory, and working capital. Terms and conditions will vary with each loan application and are based on a review of the collateral, finances, and market risk associated with each request.

Eligibility Requirements

- Revolving Loan Funds are available to businesses of all sizes that are located in one of the GMRC counties
- Applicant must attempt to secure conventional financing before applying, and they must show proof of denial from conventional financier
- The GMRC RLF Program can provide up to 100% financing with collateral approved by loan committee
- Funds can be used for gap financing when a bank is the first lien holder
- Owner must have 10% equity stake in the project
- Applicant generally is required to provide one job for each \$15,000 borrowed

Loan Amounts

The minimum loan amount is \$10,000, and the maximum amount is \$300,000



Equity Requirements

When an applicant participates with a private lending institution, the lending institution will generally hold the first lien with the GMRC RLF taking a second or junior position. GMRC RLF employs standard collateral requirements; sufficient and appropriate collateral is required for all loans. Personal guarantees will be required of any person having ownership interest of 20% or more in the business. Life insurance on key company officials will be required with an assignment to Georgia Mountains Regional Commission Loan Program, Inc.

Loan Criteria

Borrowers are eligible for GMRC RLF financing only when credit is not otherwise available and on terms and conditions that permit the completion or successful operation of the activity to be financed. Documentation will be required from outside financial sources such as a bank rejection letter, borrowers certification that credit from other sources are not in their business plan and is not going to meet their needs, or a referral from Georgia Small Business Development Center. In addition, the GMRC staff will provide written analysis in each loan file documenting the basis for the determination that the borrower meets this requirement.

Terms and Conditions

In general, loan terms for fixed asset loans will be up to 20 years and working capital up to two years. Depending on financial analyses of borrowers, interest rates and loan terms will be determined by the GMRC Loan Committee.

Loan Application Review and Approval

After receiving an application and other required documentation, the loan packet will be forwarded to the GMRC Revolving Loan Program Committee for their review. The Committee consists of up to ten individuals from the Georgia Mountains Region who represent, the business community, public sector and/or the private sector.

The RLF Committee will make a recommendation with loan conditions and terms to the full Council for approval.



Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program

WorkSource Georgia Mountains (WSGM), under Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, administers the federally funded Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program. WIOA funding is used to meet the needs of both job seekers trying to further their careers and for employers looking to hire qualified applicants for their companies. Participants and/or businesses seeking assistance must live or be located within one of the Georgia Mountains area counties.

Eligible participants can utilize WIOA funding for training costs at local colleges, universities, technical colleges and private training providers; assistance may be provided for transportation and daycare costs. This grant works alongside other federal and state financial aid programs such as HOPE and Pell. Applicants must meet the WIOA eligibility criteria for an **Adult** (18 and older), a **Dislocated Worker**, or a **Youth** (16-24). Once training is completed, local businesses can find the talent they need within their communities.

WIOA Services

College Assistance & Short-Term Training: Applicants receiving training in high demand fields must be able to complete in two years or less and have the goal of seeking full-time employment.

General Education Diploma: Assistance in covering costs of testing fees along with career guidance to transition to further training or full-time employment.

Career Coaching: Mobile computer lab that travels throughout the community to allow individuals an opportunity to receive direct assistance with learning about WIOA training assistance, receive application assistance, searching and applying for jobs online, resume and cover letter writing and review, interview skills assistance, and career interest assessments.



The **Youth Department** focuses on youth ages 16-24, offering the same overall WIOA services while tailoring the programs to keep the participants engaged and motivated. Special Youth Services:

Credit Recovery: Assists youth who have dropped out or withdrawn from high school and want to return to a program to regain the credits needed for diploma completion.

Employment Training: Provides exposure to the workforce, career professionals, and work practices while helping clarify career interests and enhance occupational skills.

SHIFT: Assists youth who are currently on probation, under court supervision, or currently incarcerated in the Hall County Regional Detention Center to develop educational and employment goals.

The **Business Services** department works closely with local businesses to develop and identify which program or blend of programs can be of most value to them. Programs include:

Incumbent Worker/Lay-off Aversion: Boosts current employees work skills by partnering with public or private consultants who can review and suggest employee trainings to improve operations; WIOA reimburses at least 50% or more of the consulting or training costs with maximum funding per worker/employee at \$12,000.

On-the-Job Training (OJT): Employers seeking to expand business may be reimbursed for OJT trainee wages at a rate between 50% - 75%; Maximum of 800 hours or \$12,000 of WIOA reimbursement per worker/employee.

Registered Apprenticeships: WIOA reimbursement will defray costs of On-the-Job Training/Classroom Training/Incumbent Worker Training with maximum reimbursement per worker at \$14,000.

Internships: Maximum 12 weeks paid internship at no cost to the employer while providing a nonobligatory opportunity to assess a prospective employee.

Training & Facilitation

How the GMRC Can Help with Strategic Planning and the Education of Staff or Elected Officials

Strategic Planning

GMRC staff have years of experience in sharing information and resources in a variety of topic areas, for a variety of governmental organizations and stakeholder groups, including city councils and county commissions, planning commissions, historic preservation committees, industrial development authorities, better hometown and mainstreet programs, and other special interests organizations.

Answers for Your Community

Several GMRC staff members are experienced at orchestrating, participating in, and leading retreats and public forums. GMRC can provide the personnel necessary to help prepare and facilitate your event, assuring you stay on course and meet your desired goals for the process. We can also provide research and insight into critical topics:

- **Visioning and goal setting:** Helping your elected officials and staff identify and define their objectives for the year or beyond.
- **Topical presentations:** Providing outside information or commentary about critical issues or concerns.
- **Instruction:** Providing basic knowledge and training about community development, planning standards, grant programs and more.
- **Facilitation:** Serving as organizer and neutral mediator for events.

What the GMRC Provides

- Quality leadership and service
- A neutral, outside party with an understanding of civic issues
- Pre and post-event meetings with officials
- Summary Report after the event

What You Provide

- Arrange and fund the facility, including housing if necessary
- Meals and snacks, as appropriate
- Copies of reference material for GMRC as requested
- Coordination with the GMRC on the location, date, and time of the event
- Arrange and fund any expenses for your session
- Arrange and fund housing or extra expenses for the GMRC staff if event lasts more than one day

Contact the GMRC and let us know how we can assist you!!!

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

770-538-2626

www.gmrc.ga.gov

info@gmrc.ga.gov

 @GeorgiaMountainsRC

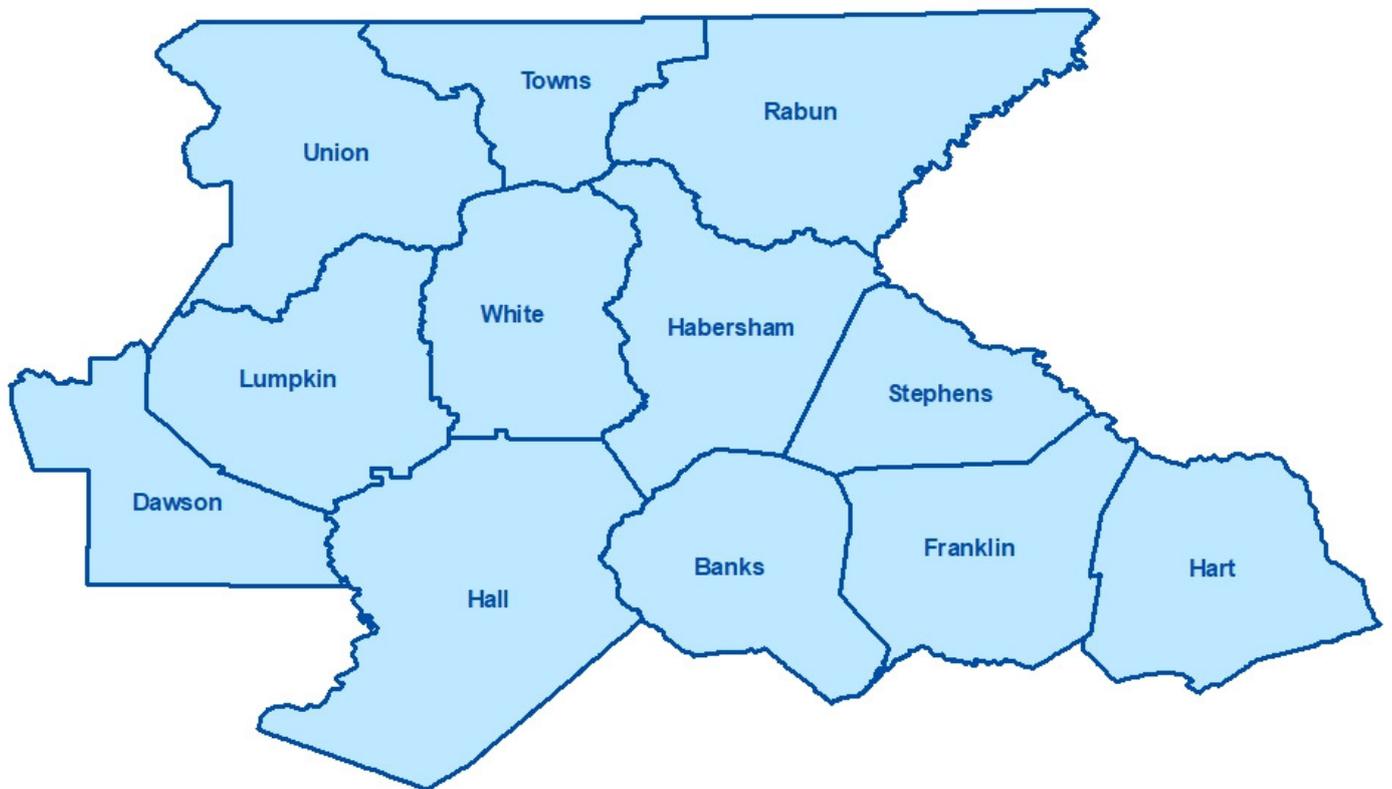
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